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REQUEST TO THE CABINET OF ONTARIO TO REVIEW

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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

In the Light of Proposed Increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement

Submitted by

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and District
153½ King Street East Hamilton, Ontario - L8N 1B1

November 1978

INTRODUCTION:

The federal government has announced its intention of increasing by $20.00 a month the Guaranteed Income Supplement paid to elderly people with little or no income aside from their Old Age Security. The cost of some services provided through the provincial government to senior citizens is subsidized, the amount of subsidy being based on the individual's income. In some cases, the new higher level of income will alter the recipient's eligibility for subsidy, and will result in either a lower subsidy or loss of the right to subsidization altogether.

In order that the increase in this federal allowance not be swallowed by the increased cost of provincial services, the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and District respectfully requests that the provincial government amend its legislation to ensure that the full intent of the federal government's increase is realized.

SOME EXAMPLES:

Several situations where such action is required have been noted by the Council:

- The rent of tenants in Senior Citizens apartment buildings is raised by from 19% to 25% of any increase in gross income. The rise in Guaranteed Income Supplement will thus result in an increase of from four to five dollars in the monthly rental of those recipients living in Senior Citizens apartments.

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- The Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services Department has studied the effect of the increase in Guaranteed Income Supplement on two samples of its elderly clients - those who receive supplementation under General Welfare Assistance, and those subsidized under the Homemakers and Nursing Services Act. The $20.00 increase was added to their current income and the effect on their eligibility for subsidization/supplementation was calculated. Fifty-five percent (55%) would be adversely affected.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The federal government has moved to improve the lot of those pensioners who are at the lowest income level. The Social Planning and Research Council feels that this increase should not be eroded, and suggests that the provincial government consider:

(a) changing the method of calculation of rents in Ontario Housing apartments so that increases in the G.I.S. do not result in increases in rent; and

(b) making all recipients of G.I.S. eligible for total subsidization under both General Welfare Assistance and the Homemakers and Nursing Services Act, provided that their assets are below the established maximum for these provincial programs.

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The Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services Department has studied the effects of the increases in Guaranteed Income Supplement on the families of its elderly clients - those who receive supplementation under General Welfare Assistance, and those subsidized under the Homemakers and Nursing Services Act. The $20.00 increase was added to their current income and the effect on their eligibility for subsidized/supplementation was calculated. Fifty-five percent (55%) would be adversely affected.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Federal Government has moved to improve the lot of those pensioners who are at the lowest income level. The Social Planning and Research Council feels that this increase should not be wasted, and suggests that the provincial government consider:

(a) changing the method of calculation of rents in Ontario Housing Corporations so that increases in the G.I.S. do not result in increases in rents; and

(b) making all recipients of G.I.S. eligible for social subsidization under both General Welfare Assistance and the Homemakers and Nursing Services Act, provided that their assets are below the established maximum for these provincial programs.

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Because the increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement becomes effective on January 1, 1979, we respectfully urge that this matter be given immediate consideration so that pensioners who require these services do not lose the benefit of the increase.

November 1, 1978

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